information, it would be difficult to assign such a house plan to any definite cultural horizon, but the architectural attempt to conceal the women is clearly Islamic, and, while it had its initial expansion under the Arabic caliphates, probably had its greatest influence in Kurdistan under the Turks when such things were carried to an extreme, at the same time reinforced by the prestige of a ruling class, in most parts of the Ottoman Empire. 342 [174] [562] [177]

The entrance of the house requires special attention, for certain important customs surround it. The doors are of heavy timbers, swinging on iron hinges, and, lacking a metal lock, are bolted at night with a heavy wooden bar which is kept in place by a second piece above it on a pivot. The outer doorway may have a fuel lamp for [373] night and in many cases is furnished with charms designed to ward off the evil eye, a belief which will be discussed in a later section. These are characteristically a blue porcelain plate, embedded in the mud wall-surfacing, or a pair of old shoes hung on a nail. The popular reasoning behind the second device is that it indicates to a person with the eye that "your malevolent glance is as powerful as our pair of old shoes," an explanation that probably has little to do with the origin of the custom. [754] [777] [751]

Whenever the construction of a house is completed, the new owner sacrifices an animal, a sheep or a goat, by cutting its throat before the door and smears some of the blood on the doorposts and the threshhold. Often he dips his hand in the blood, and applies it to the door, making by 342 782 [751] [777]

its imprint the so-called "Hand of Fatima" (referred, almost certainly ex post facto, to the daughter of the Prophet), a symbol found in almost all parts of the Middle East, particularly in amulet jewelry. The same sacrifice is applied to new additions to the house, and, in case a new storey has been built, the throat of the animal is slit over a window sill. It will be seen that when a bride enters her new home, an animal is similarly slaughtered before the threshhold and the maiden's sandal is dipped in its blood. It is an incredible breach of etiquette, if not criminal, to enter a house without announcing oneself, a usage which is supposed to have an origin in the life of the Prophet, and custom demands that the visitor knock and wait outside until ushered in. The door is usually left ajar during the day, but anyone save members of the immediate family are prohibited from entrance until permission is given.

Water flows past the houses in narrow ditches beside the streets, and is conducted to an interior basin by means of a pipe. Every larger house has somewhere, typically in the vestibule of the front door, a huge earthen jar for drinking water with a capacity of twenty or thirty gallons which is filled whenever necessary. This jar, held a few feet off the ground in an iron or wooden frame, has a porous bottom through which the liquid is filtered, dripping slowly into a second receptacle beneath it, and, by reason of evaporation, the filtered water is cooled to

rarely wear stockings, for there is little need of them with the ankle-length trousers. Those of wealthier homes often use them, obtained from the local merchants or Erbil. 291

The clothing of infants and children does not require extended discussion. Infants, both male and female, are clad in simple cloth dresses, utilized at one time for a boy and the next for a girl, and no diapers or undergarments of a specific type are in use. Girls add a pair of cotton drawers beneath the dress at about five years of age, and continue in this simple ensemble until they reach what is considered a marriageable age, usually about sixteen. At this point they begin to don the pacha or light veil whenever in public. The daughters of the wealthy may have a rich costume and jewelry in imitation of their mothers, but most have to await their wedding for these things. In a family with a number of daughters, such as that of the merchant Fatah-Ullah with six, the dresses are traded about regularly, almost from day to day, and a problem faced by parents is providing a new garment for one daughter without a storm of protests from her sisters. Little boys of the wealthy houses are also outfitted at an early age in imitation of their elders or, sometimes, as in the case of the nephew of Ra'uf Effendi (who, incidentally, always appears in Kurdish dress), have European blouses and playsuits. On the garb of this particular youngster, however to all appearances European, one must note the piece of blue porcelain pinned on the shoulder to ward off the evil eye. Most boys of the town wear [301] [751] [754]

At an early age, a girl begins to wear a number of braids, 302
and, save when undone in the bath, this type of coiffure [515]
is retained until death. The number of braids varies, and
is usually about ten. The hair is regularly stained a
reddish colour with henna whose use, in addition to being
purely customary, is said "to fortify the scalp." In some
houses, kuhl, a finely powdered sulphide of antimony
moistened with water, is applied to blacken the edges of
the eye. European cosmetics and perfumes appear in most
of the wealthier homes, and younger women paint their
lips and nails. Reddening the hands and feet with henna,
a custom for both sexes at a wedding, is not an everyday
practice. The so-called "Baghdad boil," reported to be 164
caused by larvae laid by a type of fly in the skin, 751
usually of the face, is the bane of women in cities such
as Baghdad or Mosul because of its hideous scar. It is
not found in this area, nor is the technique used to
prevent it from occurring on the countenance, artificial
infection of the ankle or calf of a child. For menstru- 841
tion clean pieces of rag are used as towels, and sexual [833]
intercourse is prohibited during the period. The cloths
are commonly washed and reused. Tattooing is denied by 304
most men to be done by women of the town, but it is
possible to observe daily female residents of the lower
classes with blue dots or marks inscribed on their faces.
These are either transient servants or migrants from the
villages where the use of tattooing is frequent. In the

cross-piece, and the whole, with the infant bound in it, 854
can be carried about easily by this last. The child is [352]
laid on a pad or mat and bound in the cradle with straps
of intricately woven and embroidered wool. A hollow piece
of cane is placed between the infant's legs whereby the
urine runs off, either on the earthen floor or into a tin.
In warm weather the cradle is covered by linen or gauze
to protect the baby from flies and mosquitoes. The cross- [751]
piece is always hung with charms against the evil eye,
verses from the Quran enclosed in cloth packets, pieces
of blue porcelain and drilled pebbles, and gilded orna-
ments. The infant's costume for both sexes is a simple 291
dress of brightly coloured material, sometimes with a 854
little apron. No undergarments are in use. The
shoulder of the dress is also pinned with charms, like
those mentioned above, or a round embroidered insignia,
much like a representation of a wagon-wheel.

A week or two after birth, the infant is named, 533
an event which is not marked in Rowanduz by an elaborate 852
ceremony. A man of wealth invites his friends to attend,
and entertains them in the guest-room with light refresh-
ments. The mulla or priest is summoned, and the baby is
placed in his arms. He has been informed of the name
selected previously by one of the family. He holds the
child in such a way as to be able to speak into its ear.
He gently intones what was described in Rowanduz as the isma
(Arabic, "creed," more correctly, the shahada, "testimony"

the Prophet's Tribe, or a holy man. The identities of 766
these two had been forgotten. In one there was the
conventional white rag tied to a pole leaning against the
wall, and in the other a tattered green banner hanging from
a flagpole whose ornament was a flat metal hand, the [751]
"Hand of Fatima" previously mentioned. Some graves had a 764
large quantity of broken blue porcelain scattered over them,
and it was said that this custom was followed if the
deceased was a young man, both to indicate the grave as
such and to avert further misfortune. There are indica-
tions, however, that breaking porcelain at death is a
cultural trait of some antiquity, and further study might
prove it an interesting index of historical connection. The
townspeople seem to take little care of their graveyard, [233]
and flocks customarily find pasture there, gathering under
the oak for shelter in the summer heat.

The mausoleum of Isma'il Beg might be mentioned 766
separately, because it is not found in the graveyard, but
beside the great house now ruled by Lali Khan, and differs
considerably from the typical Kurdish grave described above.
It is a small, square wooden building with a pitched roof
(itself a rarity in Kurdistan) entered by a door kept
locked during the night. The interior walls and ceiling
are plastered and painted with a light wash. To the
right of the door the sarcophagus stands, covered with
cloth so that identification of its material was not per-
mitted. Against the center of the wall facing the door,

be blamed for it, and there is no witch-hunting on its account. The damage is done in the single glance, and there is no known technique for averting the inevitable catastrophe once it has been initiated. 754 761

On the other hand, preventive charms are great in number. First among them are those derived from the Quran, slips of paper on which certain passages have been written or copies of the work itself. The scrolls can be obtained in metal cases which are worn about the throat, sometimes as a part of the jewelry, but are more commonly stitched in cloth packets hung on a string around the neck or pinned to the shoulder. Metal disks inscribed with the name of God are also in use, as well as expensive types of pendants which exhibit complete paragraphs from the Quran. Two popular items made up into charms are imported from Iran, irregularly shaped bits of turquoise or blue porcelain and small white sea-shells. These are pierced and either strung on a thread or kept in a cloth bag. One charm is to sew two green beads in a piece of cloth, another is a piece of pumice wrapped in a cloth, and a third, called mazu, consists of two pieces of the yellow bark of a certain tree hung on a string with a yellow bead between them. A piece of cloth from the grave of a holy man may be incorporated in some packets. An interesting symbol, a wheel whose four spokes are filled with geometric designs, is painted on the walls of houses or embroidered on cloth and sewn on the garments of children. 751 ● 777 301 [439] 751. 777 [531]

children. That a blue porcelain plate or a pair of old shoes is often installed beside the door of a house has been noticed. An iron horseshoe, as in America, may also be nailed above a door or on a wall. A human hand cut out of metal, the "Hand of Fatima" spoken of previously, is often found in jewelry. Adults seem to require little protection against the evil eye, but younger children, particularly males, almost always have charms pinned to their garments and their cradles are hung with them. Houses and animals are similarly protected. There is some rationalization of these charms. Those derived from the Quran have a power within them. The others, apart from their intrinsic qualities, deflect the glance of the evil eye from the object in question to themselves, a sort of magnetic property, because of their bright colour, their design, or something else.

777 751 ● [301] [854]

Charms such as these have a variety of origins. Minature copies of the Quran, metal disks, beads, pieces of turquoise, and shells are imported by the merchants and sold in the bazar, not only to the townspeople, but to the villagers among whom they are always in great demand. Slips of paper on which appropriate Quranic verses have been written may be obtained from one of the mullas or some other literate specialist. Cloth from the tomb of a holy man is easily obtained. Most persons assemble their own combinations, stitching them in cloth bags which are worn about the neck or pinned to the garments. Many of these are not solely to ward off

the evil eye, but have other purposes. The bodyguard of a chieftain might carry one which protects him from gunfire, and a great number are used to cure bodily ills. One of the mullas makes a practice of writing charms of this type. Such pieces of paper are usually soaked in water and the liquid is then imbibed. Recently a poor woman with some complaint visited the medical officer and the latter wrote her a prescription which could have been filled in Erbil. Under the impression that the medical officer, who neglected to explain the matter to her, operated like the mulla, the woman took the piece of paper to her home, mixed it with water, and drank it off. It might be mentioned that she was cured, and, the doctor said, reappeared the next day to request an identical piece of paper as insurance against the illness in the future. There are many amateur practitioners of white magic in the town, darwishes, midwives, and others, some of whom demand fees and others not. The barber, Hajji Mustafa, has one panacea for all ills. He ties a piece of string about the patient's wrist and "prays" over it. The investigator was furnished with some almost classical rationalizations, of illnesses, for example, "if a man is bitten by a mad dog, he will be cured when the dog is killed."

751 777 755 756 755 792

The darwish (from a Persian word meaning "poor" and adopted into Arabic in this sense) occupies a position of considerable importance in everyday life. It is unnecessary here to discuss the origins and the character of the darwish

756 792

each dwelling give them a small sum and pour a little water over the dolls. Another custom is to empty a basin of water on the ground after the departure of a traveler. Browne noticed this as he was leaving Tehran: 789 [484]

> . . . as I mounted amidst many good wishes for my journey I heard the splash of water as it was thrown after me. What the origin of this curious ceremony may be I do not know, neither did I see it practiced on any other occasion.[1]

In Rowanduz, Tuesday is considered to be an unlucky day for any outstanding enterprise, such as a major business transaction or a wedding. As among many primitive groups, the parings of fingernails and hair from a comb are not to be thrown away. There is no belief that they might be used in black magic, but it is considered "best" to wrap them in a bit of paper or a rag and place the packet in a crevice. A tooth is also put in a hole of some sort in the wall of the house, "in order that no one will get a headache." Dreams are, to some extent, considered to have prophetic significance. "An angel may come in a dream," it was said, "and point out the location of buried treasure." Some of the other superstitions, for example, the significance attached to bread, have been noticed in previous sections. 777 302 [751] 787 [776]

In concluding this section, it is difficult, if not impossible, to assay the piety of the inhabitants of Rowanduz as a whole. There are many of the townspeople who do not say five prayers daily or fast during Ramadan, and a large number of the chieftains seem to take their faith 771

[1] Browne, 1893, p. 174.